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**PENNSYLVANIA RECEIVES NEARLY \$14.6 MILLION  
FOR VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

HARRISBURG - According to a recent announcement by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, Pennsylvania will receive nearly \$14.6 million to provide financial assistance for voluntary conservation programs on working lands. These allocations are part of about \$1.4 billion that will be distributed to the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Basin.

"Conservation on private lands is an important priority for USDA. We are fulfilling that commitment by responding to the needs of agricultural producers to provide more certainty and predictability in their environmental stewardship decisions before planting season begins," said Johanns. "The early release of these funds will give producers time to develop effective conservation plans and help them to improve their land."

With financial and technical assistance from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, farmers and other landowners will continue to address resource concerns on agricultural working lands, promote environmental quality, address challenges in water quality and quantity, protect prime farmland and grazing lands and protect valuable wetlands ecosystems and wildlife habitat.

Key voluntary conservation programs and allocations in Pennsylvania include:

- Conservation Security Program (CSP): \$896,600. CSP supports ongoing stewardship of private, agricultural working lands and rewards those producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. This will fund existing contracts. Funds for CSP signups will be allocated to Pennsylvania at a later date.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): \$10,470,862. EQIP assists farmers to improve soil, air and water quality and other related resources on private working lands.
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): \$277,826. WRP helps landowners restore, enhance and protect wetlands through permanent easements, 30-year easements and restoration cost-share agreements. The program maximizes wildlife habitat and wetland functions and values.
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP): \$2,717,102. FRPP provides matching funds to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to purchase conservation easements.

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- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): \$193,563. WHIP offers technical and financial assistance through long-term agreements to create, restore and enhance wildlife habitat for upland wildlife, wetland wildlife, threatened, endangered or at-risk species and fisheries as well as other types of wildlife.

Additional information about these voluntary conservation programs and eligibility requirements is available at <http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>. Landowners who want specific information regarding program participation should contact their local USDA Service Center or NRCS office located at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the telephone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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